Anger

The A-B-C-D Model

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PURPOSE OF GROUP: to apply the A-B-C-D model

to increase anger management skills

to increase coping skills

to challenge irrational thoughts

MATERIALS NEEDED: pens/pencils for each group member

piece of paper for each group member

handout, "The A-B-C-D Model" (print p. 4; have enough copies for each group member)

handout, "Applying the A-B-C-D Model" (print p. 5; have enough copies for each group member)

1. Facilitator can open group with an **icebreaker**.

*Give each group member pen/pencil and a piece of paper. Ask them to think of a logo that represents them in some way and to draw it. They can draw a logo that already exists or create their own (Example= an athlete/sports fanatic can draw the logo of his favorite sports team)

*Allow volunteers to share when they're done drawing

2.

-You can now introduce the focus of today's group, **The A-B-C-D model**, which is a tool that can help you better manage your anger.

-Psychologist Albert Ellis created this model because he believed **it is not events themselves that cause anger but our beliefs & interpretations of those events**

-Let's look more closely at this model (you can give group members handout, "**The A-B-C-D Model**" on p. 4 of this guide so they can better follow along):

-A= **A**ctivating event
- a. This refers to the situation that activates your emotional response (a "trigger")

-B= **B**elief system
- a. This refers to **how you interpret the activating event**
- b. It's important to pay attention to self-talk and distorted thinking (i.e. when we have expectations about what *should* happen or about how others *should* behave)

-C= **C**onsequences
- a. This refers to how you feel and how you respond to your beliefs

-D= **D**ispute
- a. This refers to the step in which **we examine & adjust our beliefs/expectations**
- b. Are our beliefs realistic & rational? Is there a better (healthier) way to look at the situation?
- c. This step is key in the anger management process!

2.

-Let's look at the following **example** so we can better understand the A-B-C-D model:

-**A**ctivating event= You've been waiting in line at the grocery store for almost ten minutes. The line is pretty long. The woman checking out keeps asking questions and keeps looking in her purse for some coupons

-**B**elief system= "This is ridiculous. She needs to leave! She should forget about her stupid coupons and just pay. A long line like this should never happen"

-**C**onsequences= Your muscles are becoming tense, and you yell an expletive. You feel antsy, impatient, and flustered. You tell the woman that she "better hurry up"

-**D**ispute= It's frustrating, but long lines happen. That's life! Maybe this woman needs those coupons in order to pay for her groceries…

-As you can see, the A-B-C-D model helps de-escalate situations and allows you to better handle your anger and re-evaluate distorted thinking.

3. Group members will now participate in an **activity** in which **they will practice using the A-B-C-D model.**

*Give group members handout, "**Applying The A-B-C-D Model**" (print p. 5 of this guide)

*Ask group members to think of a recent situation in which they became angry and follow the steps on the handout. For the last part ("Dispute"), they can write how they could have better handled the situation

*Allow volunteers to share when they're done writing

4. Facilitator can conclude group by asking group members the following questions:

-Can you identify any cognitive distortions in part "B" ("Belief system")?

    a. <u>Example</u>= "She needs to leave! She should forget about her stupid coupons and just pay. A long line like this should never happen" – Should statements

    b. <u>Example</u>= "This is the worst day ever!" – Catastrophizing

    c. <u>Example</u>= "He is such a fool!" – Labeling

-Look at the situation you wrote down. On a scale of 1-10, how high was your anger level?

-What number do you think your anger level would have dropped down to if you had adjusted your self-talk to what you wrote down in part "D" ("Dispute")?

-When you are in "the heat of the moment", it can be hard to think rationally. How can you apply this tool (the A-B-C-D model) in the "real world"? Is there anything you can say to yourself so you will remember this tool?

    *You can tell group members that practice is key. The more you practice using the model (by reflecting on past incidents), the more likely you are to draw upon it in the future

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Applying The A-B-C-D Model

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-**B**elief system=

-**C**onsequences=

-**D**ispute=